Snusmumrik no Koibito

Volume 1 Chapter 2

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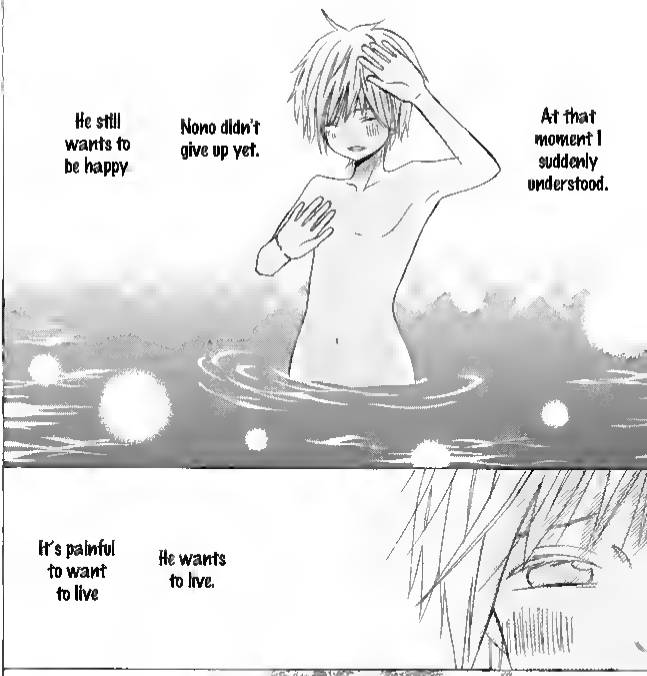
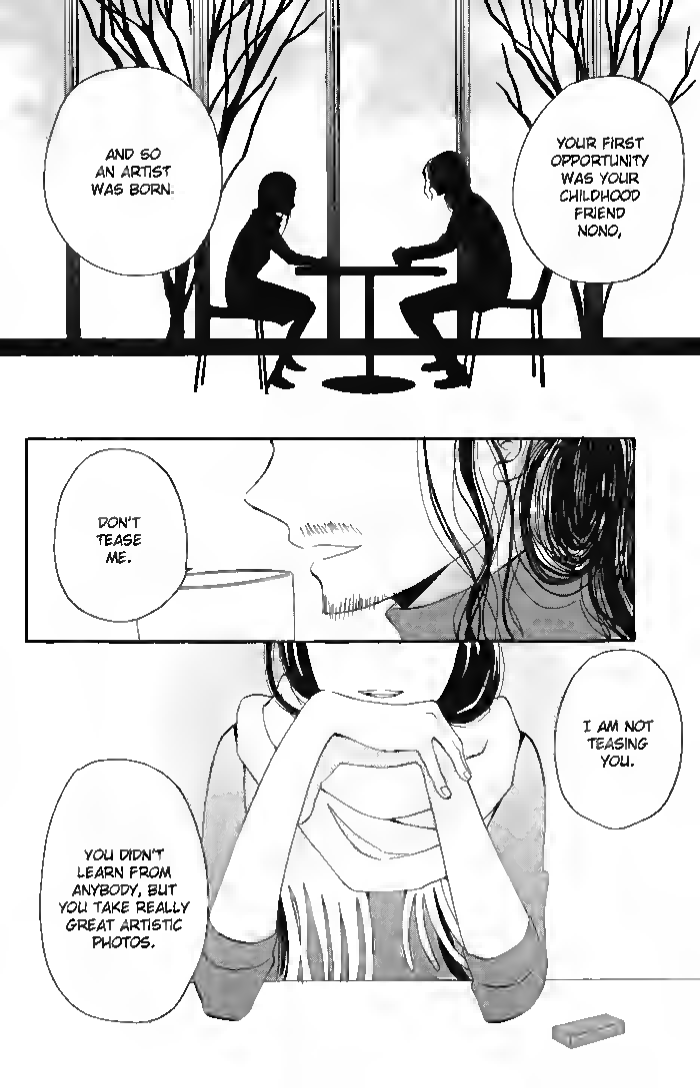
EPISODE 2
HIS LOVER

shaaa
shaaa
...
NONO.

NAO-CHAN, AM I A MONSTER?
I AM NOT A MAN OR A WOMAN ...
...YEAH, I THINK SO.
BUT YOU ARE REALLY A BEAUTIFUL MONSTER.
WHY WAS I BORN ..
NONO,
I WILL TAKE A PHOTO.

Kacha
Kacha
Kacha
Kacha
K...ha
I CAN'T EMBRACE ANYBODY.
I CAN ONLY EMBRACE MYSELF...


He still wants to be happy
Nono didn't give up yet.
At that moment I suddenly understood.
It's painful to want to live
He wants to live.
so for that reason he is this beautiful.


AND SO AN ARTIST WAS BORN.
YOUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND NONO,
DON'T TEASE ME.
I AM NOT TEASING YOU.
YOU DIDN'T LEARN FROM ANYBODY, BUT YOU TAKE REALLY GREAT ARTISTIC PHOTOS.

THE NAKED-NESS
SHOWING CRUELTY BEFORE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.
DO YOU KNOW THIS SHOP...
DO YOU KNOW THE MEANING BEHIND THE NAME OF 'SNUSMUMRIK'?
IT IS THE REAL NAME OF SNUFKIN.*
cafe SNUSMUMRIK
*NOTE: SNUFKIN IS A CHARACTER FROM TOVE JANSSON'S MOOMIN SERIES

When the evening came, we realized that we can't find Nono.
IT'S OKAY. NOTHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM.
Under the heavy atmosphere, the time passed quickly.
IT'S LATE NOW, SO YOU GUYS SHOULD GO HOME AND SLEEP.
The [illegible] that I can't forget. It was when we were 5th grade in primary school.
To Nono and to us
something unforgettable happened.

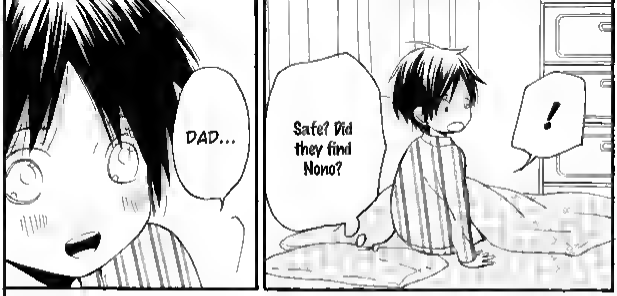
I can't sleep
I am going to watch Snufkin...
gyon gyon
It was because Snufkin was a huge presence to me.
At that time I... No, after mom left us, I was used to sleeping alone.
In Moomin tales, Snufkin always slept alone.
I am like Snufkin, too.
We look alike.

I relaxed, I felt like I could hear the harmonica playing somewhere far away.
I imagined it and closed my eyes.
But on that day, I dreamt the worst nightmare.
NAO-CHAN,
ARE YOU AWAKE?

NONO!
LOOK, NAO-CHAN, I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING
WHERE WERE YOU! EVERYBODY IS WORRIED
YOU KNOW WHAT...
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
KILL NONO.

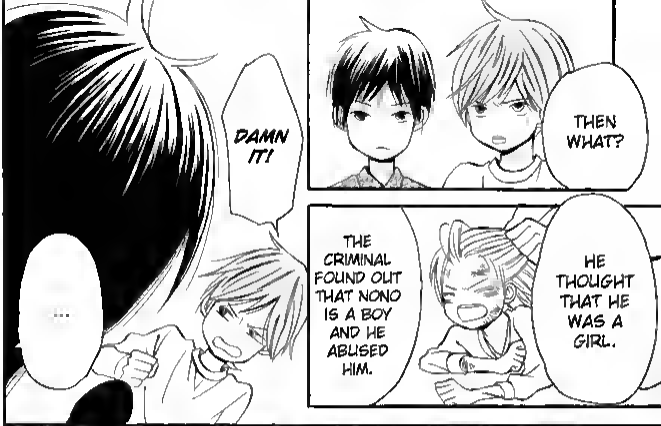
NONO
WANTS TO DIE BEFORE HE IS EATEN.
DON'T SAY SUCH NONSENSE! WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT YOU'RE GOING TO GET EATEN—
I AM ASKING YOU..
I CAN'T DO ANY-THING LIKE THAT!
IT LOOKS LIKE HE WILL BE YUMMY
GYAAA!!
NONO!!
Whoosh
NAO-CHAN, SAVE ME!

SFX FWAP
NONO!!
WHY DIDN'T YOU KILL ME?!
Was it a dream...
haa-
haa-
IN ANY CASE... THANK GOD THAT HE IS SAFE!
whisper
whisper

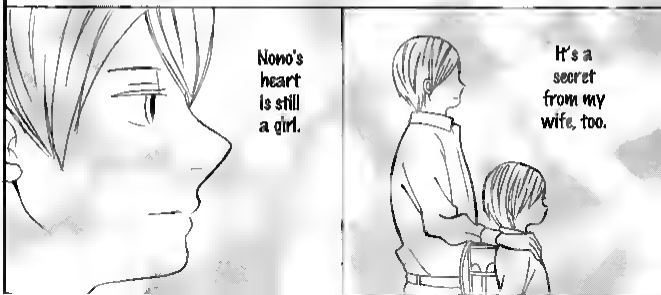


DOES IT LOOK LIKE HE IS SAFE?

IT WAS ON NEWS.
HE WAS AN EMPLOYEE AT THE PIZZA RESTAURANT AROUND KINPACHI.
PIZZA?! DAMN IT!
CALM DOWN, TETSUYA
NONO DIDN'T COME HOME?
I CAN'T SEE THE CAR...
DIDN'T HE GO TO THE POLICE STATION FOR QUESTIONING?
IT IS THE HOSPITAL, TETSUYA
THE PERSON WASN'T TRYING TO KIDNAP HIM.



Naoki-kun, this is a secret from everybody.



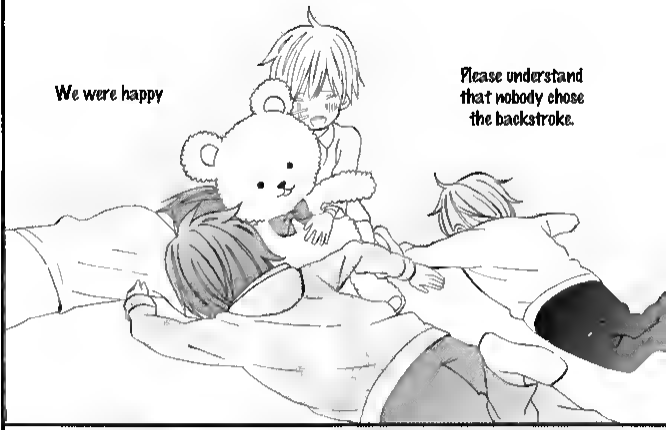
...HE IS A GIRL.
NONO'S HEART IS A GIRL.

I KNOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO NOZOMI, BUT HE WAS DISCHARGED YESTERDAY.
EVERYBODY GATHER AROUND HERE.
BUT HE LOOKS LIKE HE CAN EAT NOW
THERE ARE STILL SOME BRUISES ON HIS FACE AND HANDS,
THERE COULD BE A WEIRD RUMOUR, AND NOZOMI COULD SUFFER.
ESPECIALLY ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL
NOSAKA'S MOM IS STILL VERY ANXIOUS.
COULD YOU PROTECT HIM?
COULD YOU PROTECT NOZOMI AS A FRIEND?

...YES.
YES!
...YES.
NONO
YOU, YOU SHOULD OPEN IT, NAOKI
WILL NONO BE OKAY?
IT'S MAKING MY HEART BEAT SO FAST

HAS EVERYBODY BEEN WELL?
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU ALL LOOK DOWN. HAVE YOU BEEN WELL?
WE, WE HAVE BEEN WELL.
WE WERE A LITTLE LONELY, BECAUSE NONO WASN'T AROUND.
RIGHT.
fwap

NONO IS BACK.
EVERY-BODY'S IDOL.
SFX FLOF
AAH
WEL-COME!!
AH~
AH~
TETSU-CHAN.
SWIM
WEL-COME!
I'll swim too
NA-NAO-CHAN?
FREE STYLE SWIM!
Swim swim
EVEN KIYOTO-KUN.
sui sui
WEL-COME!
Breast-stroke

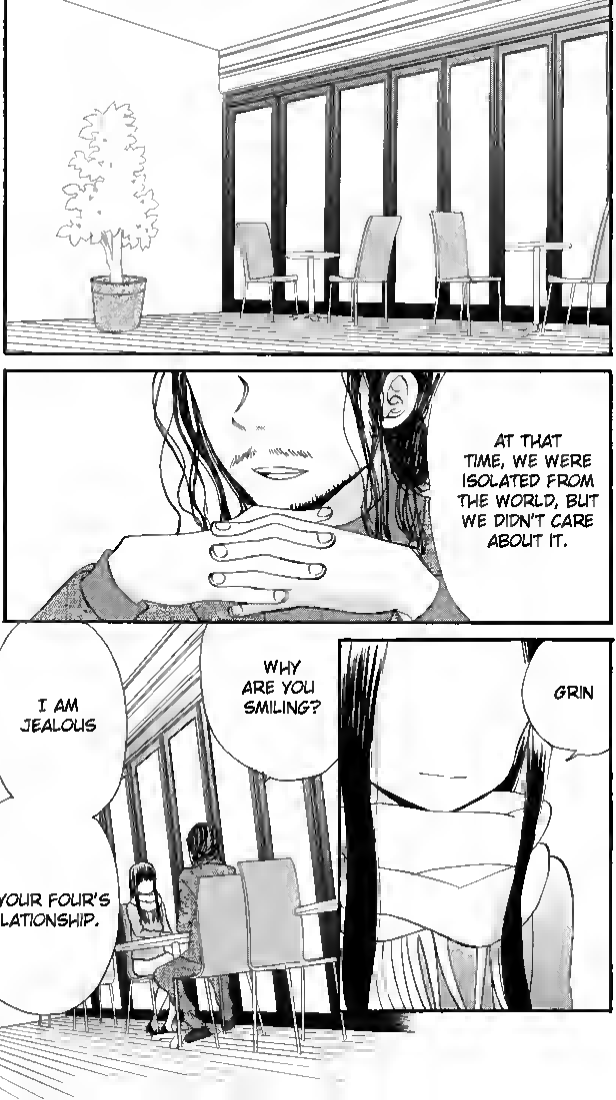


but angry at the same time.

It was impossible for us to get away from Nono.

Tetsuya stood in the front and me and Kiyoto took care of Nono from each side.

On the first day of school, Nono looked worried about going to school


AT THAT TIME, WE WERE ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD, BUT WE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT IT.
GRIN
WHY ARE YOU SMILING?
I AM JEALOUS OF YOUR FOUR'S RELATIONSHIP.

AFTER THAT, TETSUYA STARTED TO LEARN BOXING.
TO PROTECT NONO?
WELL, IT WAS SIMPLE THINKING, BUT IT SHOULD BE COMPLI-MENTED.
AND KIYOTO STARTED TO STUDY HARD.
HE WAS THE SCHOOL PRESIDENT.
HE HAD REALLY GREAT GRADES BOTH IN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL.
WHAT DID YOU DO? SOMETHING LIKE THOSE THREE DID STUFF...
I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING.
YES, REALLY, NOTHING.
NOTHING?

I COULDN'T WORK HARD FOR SOME-BODY.
THAT MUST BE ABOUT THE STORY THAT YOU ARE GOING TO TELL ME NOW.
SO THERE WASN'T ANY SPECIAL CHANGE UNTIL THEN.
Kacha
IF I SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT, THEN...

NONO STOPPED CALLING HIMSELF NONO.

When we became middle school students, there was a change.
...We went to an all-boys school for six years, middle school and high school, which was located in Hiyoshi, Yokohama.
I WROTE MY EMAIL ADDRESS ON IT. IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, PLEASE!
UHM... THIS....
ME?
OH OH <3
ME, ME?
U-UHM.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY-BODY.
WHAT ABOUT KIYOTO?
LISTEN, LISTEN! I HAD FOUR GIRLS TODAY!

NAOKI!
KIYOTO!
YOU ARE DOING WELL, KIYOTO
Not sad not sad
...MM I CAN'T GET USED TO IT.
HEY! ARE YOU GOING HOME NOW?
Uh, YOU ARE DOING WELL, TETSUYA
But I have one more girl
Gya—
Gya—
Gya—
Cute
Cute
KACHA

Ah, EVERYBODY IS HERE?
LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER.
cute <3
cute <3
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DO ANY CLUB WORK TODAY, NONO?
The wind instrument music
YEAH, I AM RESTING TODAY...
NONO, YOU PLAY THE FLUTE WELL...
THANK YOU.
NAO-CHAN IS SENDING EMAILS AGAIN
Probably a girl
YEAH.
YOU SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON ONE GIRL, NAO-CHAN.
THEY ARE JUST FRIENDS.

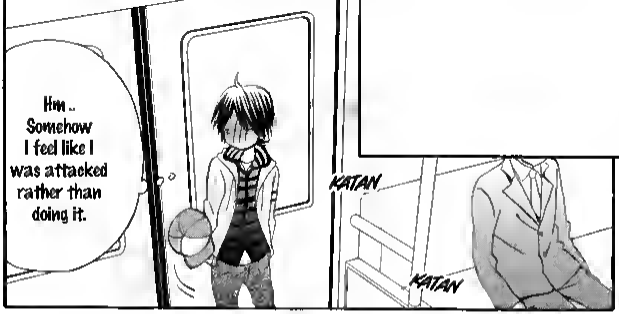
That person understood me and Nono at the same time.
That time, I had a shocking meeting with somebody.
Is it Indie players?
SFX TAN TAN TAN
NIKE
And
Whoosh

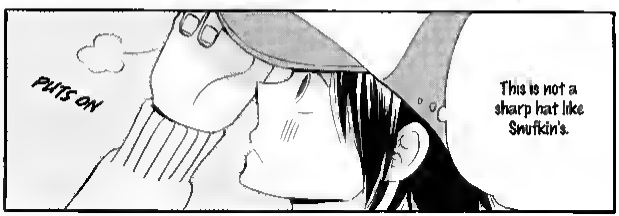
she took my virginity.
PLOP
Why are things happening like this?
AH.
NANAKO?
THAT'S RIGHT, I DIDN'T HEAR YOUR NAME

NAOKI!
LET'S HAVE A TOAST.
I AM NAOKI KOMURA.
AH, EVERYBODY CALLS ME LIKE THAT.
I DON'T CARE IF IT'S ANYBODY, I JUST WANT TO DO IT.
AFTER I DANCE
I ALWAYS DO THIS.
NO MATTER IF IT IS A BOY OR A GIRL.
I LIKE IT WITH ANYBODY IF THEY ARE PRETTY.
AH, RIGHT
There's why

BI?
I AM BI.
ME.
BISEXUAL
MY BODY IS A WOMAN,
BUT I HAVE A HEART OF A MAN, TOO
ONE OF MY FRIEND IS THE SAME CASE, THOUGH IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
HIS BODY IS A MAN, BUT HIS HEART IS A WOMAN.

HM...
BUT WHETHER IT'S BIG OR SMALL, ALMOST EVERYBODY HAS IT.
THE PROBLEM IS ABOUT THE PERCENTAGE, I THINK.
DOES IT MATTER HOW MUCH OF YOURSELF IS YOUR GENDER?
USUALLY 9:1 PERCENTAGE IS SIMILAR TO YOUR OWN BODY.
HM...
stare
DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?
I was thinking about Nono seriously...
squeeze
DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?
...YES.
EH! EH?
DO YOU WANT TO DO IT AGAIN?
Nono... I am sorry



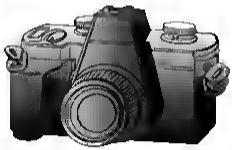


I still can't forget how moved I was when I took photos of Nono at the sea.

When I took a photo of Nono, I felt so moved and something was born inside of me,
but I think that all of that was possible because it was Nono

But suddenly I was carrying around the camera, but I didn't take a lot of photos
Even though people posed for me, I took just common photos.
I was almost sure that I was disgusted with everything.

I stopped carrying the camera soon after that.



HEY, HEY, I HAVE A PREMIUM TICKET FOR 3R.
DO YOU WANT TO GO TOGE-THER?
THEY'RE SO PO-PULAR THAT IT WAS HARD TO GET.
AH, SURE.
3R? Who are they?
At that moment,
あああああ
once again,
I met her
SFX: WAAAAA
in an unexpected place.
IT'S 3R. HELLO!

WAAAAA
I'M SORRY I WILL COME BACK SOON!
SOMEBODY IS CALLING FOR YOU
WHAT? WHO?
PAT
NAOKI!
EX, EXCUSE ME!
creak

NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED. IT FEELS LIKE YOU HAVE GROWN UP A LITTLE?!
I WAS SURPRISED.
WE DIDN'T GET THAT MANY PEOPLE IN SHIBUYA...
ME NEITHER!
AH? I DIDN'T COUNT THEM.
HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU DO IT WITH A GIRL AFTER THAT?
WE ARE BOTH NON-COMMITTAL.
ARE WE?
WE ARE ALIKE,
NAOKI AND ME.

IS THIS YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?
AH!
LET'S SEE, LET'S SEE, WHAT YOU HAVE
Wait-
Rummage
LOOK WELL
AH, IT IS A GUY.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT I SAID BEFORE?
I TOLD YOU ABOUT A GUY WHO IS LIKE YOU BUT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
YES, I REMEMBER.
IS THAT HIM? HIS BODY IS A BOY, BUT HIS HEART IS A GIRL?
HE IS PRETTY.
BOTH HIS FACE
AND BODY.
YEAH. HE IS NONO MY CHILDHOOD FRIEND
HE IS MY BEST FRIEND

THIS IS REALLY A GREAT PHOTO. WONDERFUL!
YEAH.
DID NAOKI TAKE IT?
IT'S BECAUSE THE MODEL IS NICE
THAT'S NOT TRUE. THERE ARE PRETTY PEOPLE EVERY-WHERE
AND THERE ARE LOTS OF PRETTY PICTURES.
THIS PHOTO IS
PRETTY AND CRUEL.

IT WAS TAKEN WHEN NONO HAD A HARD TIME
YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT.
BUT THIS IS CLEARLY WHAT NAOKI ALONE CAN SHOW
AND THE COOL SIDE ABOUT THIS PHOTO IS THAT YOU ARE NOT PITYING HIM.
YOU CAN FIND OUT ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT?
NAOKI AND I ARE SIMILAR.

YOU OFTEN WORRY ABOUT WHETHER YOU ARE A COLD PERSON OR NOT?
YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT MEANS THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THE DANCERS.
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DANCE AND THOSE WHO ARE MADE TO DANCE.
NONE OF THEM IS RIGHT.
IN OLYMPICS AND LIVE CONCERTS LIKE TODAY, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH DANCING AND PEOPLE WHO DON'T GET INTERESTED IN ANYTHING ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.
BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN ABOUT DANCING?
THAT I DON'T EVEN KNOW, YET.
I DON'T THINK THIS IS MY ANSWER NOW. I CAN STOP ANYTIME.

NANAKO HAS THE TALENT, SO YOU CAN SAY THINGS LIKE THAT.
I ONLY DO THINGS WITH MINIMUM EFFORT
PEOPLE WHO DON'T MAKE MUCH EFFORT, ALL REALLY WANT SOMETHING

IT'S THE FIRST TIME FOR ME TO HEAR SOMEBODY SAY THAT.
THEY WANT SOMETHING, SO THEY ARE NOT MAKING MUCH EFFORT AT SOMETHING ELSE
BUT IF THEY CAN'T FIND WHAT THEY WANT, THEY ARE JUST GOING TO GO ON LIVING AND DIE
BUT IS NAOKI OKAY LIKE THAT?
YEAH

SFX ZAAAAA
HELLO, NAOKI?! WHERE ARE YOU?!
SOME-THING BIG HAPPENED!
NONO'S FATHER IS....!
HUH?
I HAVE A LOT OF THINGS PILED UP ON MY PHONE
WHAT ABOUT THE VOICE MAIL?
I AM GOING TO LISTEN TO IT NOW
I AM GOING TO PLAY THE MESSAGE THAT IS IN YOUR VOICEMAIL

Naoki-kun,
Nono's heart is a girl.
Damn it!
WHY ONLY NONO...

After that day

Nono avoided me.

TETSU-CHAN. WRITE IN YOUR NOTEBOOK PROPERLY
AH. I DON'T WANT TO TAKE THE EXAM—
...
Flip

...
Flip

NONO THINKS THAT HIS FATHER COMMITTED SUICIDE INSTEAD OF BEING IT AN ACCIDENT
NAO-CHAN
THIS IS ONLY WHAT NONO SAID, SO NAO-CHAN SHOULDN'T FEEL BAD ABOUT IT.

NONO'S MOTHER
AND YOUR FATHER..
SO MY FATHER AND NONO'S MOTHER CHEATED THEIR SPOUSES?
I AM SORRY, BUT WE WILL NEVER KNOW THE TRUTH.
BUT NONO'S FATHER DIED FROM AN ACCIDENT.
NONO IS IN A SHOCK AND ONLY BELIEVES THAT.
THEN I AM SORRY, BUT DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT THIS ANYMORE, OKAY?

thinking about something else —

I kept

Nono's father's death couldn't have been a suicide. It was an accident
about Nono.
It's just that...
how much is Nono hurt to feel only hatred for somebody.
What Nono wants can't be filled from our friendship.

The substitute for his father
who loves him truly and understands him completely...
real person
isn't anywhere probably.
For me,
I didn't want to face Nono, either.

I was ignoring Nono, who was my best friend, but I couldn't do anything else for him rather than ignore him.
min
min
min
When the summer holidays came, I started a part time job at a construction site.
KOMURA, COULD YOU BUY US SOME TEAS FOR US TO REST?
I made an excuse that I needed to work out a bit.
YES.
KARAHAN

AH, I HAVE TO BUY LOTS MORE,
SO YOU GO FIRST.
...
LET'S GO TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE.
...
Do I smell of sweat?
sniff
sniff
Who were those guys?
たたた
...
SFX: TAP TAP TAP
たたたっ
SFX: TAP TAP TAP

THIS?
FLICK
SAY, IS THIS YOU?
AAH
YEAH.
FLICK
THIS, TOO?
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
AND THIS, TOO?!!

YOU SHOULDN'T LAUGH ABOUT IT!
Her face is really some-thing
IT IS PROBABLY ME
RIGHT~
THIS GIRL IS MY FRIEND.
SHE SAID THAT SHE WAS IN LOVE WITH HER BOY-FRIEND.
THIS IS ANOTHER FRIEND.
SHE SAID HER BOYFRIEND IS REALLY CUTE
AND THIS GIRL IS A FRIEND AS WELL, SHE SAID THAT SHE WENT TO 3R'S CON-CERT WITH HER BOYFRIEND.

YEAH.
ALL THREE OF THEM HAVE PHOTOS WITH THE SAME BOYFRIEND..
SO AT THAT TIME, I THOUGHT THIS
WHAT DID YOU THINK?
PROBABLY YOU GO OUT WITH 10 TIMES MORE GIRLS THAN THIS!
ISN'T 10 TIMES TOO MUCH?
IT'S NOT JUST A COINCIDENCE THAT YOU ONLY WENT OUT WITH THOSE THREE GIRLS?

I CAN SEE THAT TOO!
I HAVE MY FRIENDS WAITING FOR ME, TOO.
I'M SORRY, BUT I AM DOING MY PART TIME JOB NOW, SO I CAN'T VANISH.
THANK YOU.
YOU ARE SPECTACULARLY MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THEM
THIS IS ENTIRELY ANOTHER STORY.
YOU ARE SURPRISINGLY HONEST.
WHAT KIND OF IRON MACE ARE YOU GOING TO HIT ME WITH?
SO
MM

I AM GOING TO TAKE THREE FOR NOW.
GRAB
YOU ARE A THIEF.
A HEART THIEF?
BORING!
YOU, TOO!

I didn't know that she was going to be a bridge that connects Nono and me.

This was my meeting with her.

PLOP
She was an interesting kid.
Nono's flute?
It feels nice.
Come to think of it, I listened to it every day before.

This is the valley of Moomin.
Aah
flutter
I am Snufkin?
I always thought about what Snufkin does alone.

Maybe he
had a lover who unfortunately lost her life and he couldn't see her again.
Sometimes he could hear a flute playing coming down from heaven like this.
He could have played his harmonica along with it.

He didn't love solitude.

With his

Snusmumrik's lover...